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DE RUEHPE #1862/01 1441721
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
P 241721Z MAY 07
FM AMEMBASSY LIMA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5592
INFO RUEHBO/AMEMBASSY BOGOTA 4682
RUEHBR/AMEMBASSY BRASILIA 7353
RUEHCV/AMEMBASSY CARACAS 0417
RUEHLP/AMEMBASSY LA PAZ MAY QUITO 1231
RUEHSG/AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO 1294
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC
RHMFIUU/CDR USSOUTHCOM MIAMI FL
RUEABND/DEA HQS WASHDC
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC
RHEHOND/DIRONDCP WASHDC

UNCLAS LIMA 001862

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE
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E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [PTER](#) [PGOV](#) [PINR](#) [SNAR](#) [PE](#)
SUBJECT: CLOCK TICKING FOR GARCIA IN THE HIGHLANDS

REF: A. LIMA 4516 (06)

- [B](#). LIMA 248 (06)
- [C](#). LIMA 37 (05)
- [D](#). LIMA 4968 (03)

Summary:

[1](#). (SBU) Residents of Apurimac, a southern highlands region and former Humala stronghold, have seen few benefits from the Garcia government, according to interlocutors interviewed by poloffs during a May 13-15 visit. Despite a pro-Humala history, most elected local leaders are non-ideological technocrats. Local NGO representatives said that this mineral-rich region has great economic potential but also latent possibilities for significant mining conflicts with highlands indigenous communities. The vast majority of contacts warned that, if the GOP cannot deliver on its promises, Apurimac voters would again turn to radical, "anti-system" candidates -- to the Humalas or "someone just like them" -- in future elections. End Summary.

[2](#). (U) Poloffs visited the Apurimac Region May 13-15 and met with a wide variety of local interlocutors, including Regional President David Abraham Salazar Morote, Regional Vice President Willer Taype, Andahuaylas Mayor Dr. Manuel Molina, Abancay Mayor Jose Manuel Campos Cespedes, Abancay City Manager Colonel (retired) Raul Gutierrez Rodas, Huancarama Mayor Carlos Cavero Contreras, Abancay Public School Director Roberto Hurtado, CARE local representative Juan Soto, local small enterprise silk producer Jose Peralta Huaman, and former International Visitor and Quechua translator Alejandrina Contreras Merino.

Apurimac is Humala Country...

[3](#). (U) Apurimac, one of Peru's poorest regions, is divided by a longstanding rivalry between its two largest cities -- the regional capital of Abancay and its largest population center, Andahuaylas. Seventy-eight percent of Apurimac's residents live in poverty and 40 percent lack electricity. Infrastructure is poor. The main road that links Andahuaylas to Abancay is a rutted, dirt track that requires half a day to navigate and features dangerous hairpin curves that

overlook drops of thousands of feet. Along the way, one finds isolated towns and villages with almost no basic services.

¶4. (SBU) Not coincidentally, in recent years Apurimac Residents have vocally backed some of Peru's most radical political leaders, the Humalas. In the 2006 presidential elections, Apurimac favored radical nationalist candidate Ollanta Humala, who garnered 71% of the region's vote in the second round run-off against Alan Garcia. In 2005, the region was home to the attempted "Ethno-cacerista" rebellion led by Antauro Humala. That radical fringe group continues to enjoy sympathy among elements of the local population. (Refs B-D).

...And It's Not

¶5. (U) Notwithstanding Apurimac's pro-Humala past, neither Humala has a strong organizational presence in the region. Ollanta Humala's Peruvian Nationalist Party (PNP) has all but disappeared, while Antauro Humala's Ethnocacerista "Reservists" continue to organize in small highlands villages in the interior. In the November 2006 regional and municipal elections, local voters opted not for PNP or other ideological radicals but instead elected a series of technocrats and locally-trained professionals who had risen out of regional political movements. Like many of their counterparts around Peru, the style of Apurimac's elected regional and municipal leadership is largely non-ideological and focused on problem-solving and promoting development.

¶6. (SBU) Interviews with a variety of local leaders confirmed their pragmatic bent. Regional President Salazar, an industrial engineer by training, spoke earnestly of his support for Peru Trade Promotion Authority (PTPA) and the export opportunities it will bring. Abancay Mayor Manuel Campos launched his political career when he formed a group of local professionals, including architects and young engineers, called "All United for Abancay," that did pro bono work refurbishing rural schools. Andahuaylas Mayor Molina is a former lawyer who has assembled a team that includes agricultural experts.

Ominous Signs: Humala, Narcotraffickers, Mining Conflicts

¶7. (SBU) Post-2006 election Apurimac remains peaceful, but Poloffs heard indications of potential future difficulties:

--APRA Mayor of Huancarama Carlos Caverro told Poloffs that Antauro Humala's Ethnocacerista "Reservists" are organizing in the hillside villages around his town. Huancarama is an isolated town in the center of Apurimac, accessible only by the dirt road that links Andahuaylas and Abancay.

--All local officials complained of narcotrafficking. Apurimac is a transit zone for drugs produced elsewhere. Mayor Caverro spoke of caravans of expensive 4x4 pickup trucks passing through his town in the night. Andahuaylas Mayor Molina pointed out a discotheque he had recently closed down just off the town's central plaza, "The Kreazzy Buffalo (sic)," which he described as noisy and offensive in a conservative local culture and an obvious money-laundering operation. Molina also said that narco-money was pushing up property values in the town center. He noted that a building on the town square had recently sold for USD 200,000. He asked rhetorically, "Who but narco-traffickers has that kind of money out here?" (Note: The combination of new discos and rising property values paralleled what residents of Huanta and Ayacucho had reported last November about narco-penetration of their local economies, though these forces remain incipient in Apurimac (Ref A). End Note.) School Director Roberto Hurtado said drug use among youth in Abancay remains low to non-existent "for now," but could soon spread into the area from nearby Cusco.

--Mining Conflicts Latent. CARE Representative Juan Soto told Poloffs that Apurimac faces an imminent challenge in the mining arena. Many foreign mining firms are finding that the region is rich in mineral deposits, and will soon seek permission from the Ministry of Energy and Mines to develop these resources. The Ministry has few if any back-linkages to the highlands, Quechua-speaking communities that live in potential mining areas.

Where,s the Beef?

18. (SBU) Apurimac's residents are perplexed at the lack of government action almost one year into the Garcia Administration. Leaders in Andahuaylas spoke of planned government projects, but nowhere did Poloffs see evidence that any were underway. Locals were dismayed by President Garcia,s recent visit to Andahuaylas, particularly his announcement of a plan to "study" a long-awaited project to pave the road between Andahuaylas and Abancay. Upon hearing that the project remained under study, many in the crowd heckled the President. Also of concern was the central government's alleged divide and rule approach. Abancay Mayor Campos maintained that both the Regional President and the central government pour resources into the Andahuaylas area, where the majority of Apurimac's voters (60 percent) live. He alleged that the Regional President had received construction equipment from the GOP that he was refusing to share with the Abancay Municipality because, the Mayor charged, he wanted to address Andahuaylas' needs first.

Comment:

19. (SBU) Apurimac is a highly traditional, conservative region whose political history features bouts of intermittent radicalism. The message from local contacts was clear: if visible, concrete action from the GOP in infrastructure, health, and education does not come soon, Apurimac's residents could turn again to the Humalas or to "someone just like them."
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